

## **George H. Johnson IV, Supervisory Federal Air Marshal, OLE/FAMS Law Enforcement Information Coordination Section (ICS)**

### ***Bio***

Mr. Johnson joined the Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS) in May 2002 and is currently assigned as a Supervisory Federal Air Marshal (SFAM) in the Law Enforcement Information Coordination Section and detailed to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Criminal Investigative Division (CID). In this capacity he has program management responsibility over the Transportation Crimes Sub-Program, the FBI Law Enforcement Flying Armed Program, the Laser Strike Working Group (LSWG), and the Unmanned Aerial System Working Group. As LSWG lead for the FBI, SFAM Johnson has been responsible for a number of laser awareness efforts since 2012 and was most recently credited with a national reward initiative launched on June 3, 2014. As an ICS supervisor, he has been responsible for planning, leading, and directing the work of 33 FAM investigators and supervising the investigation of suspicious incidents in the aviation domain to include the vetting of Suspicious Incident Reports, Activity Reports, Reportable Communications, and Federal Flight Deck Officer Reports. He managed the Special Mission Coverage (SMC) Program, a complex task requiring coordination at all levels of the law enforcement and transportation domain. His assignments in the FAMS include two years in Liaison Division – International Section, where he developed, coordinated and assisted in the negotiation of 13 international agreements between the OLE/FAMS and foreign nations. During this period, he managed the progress of 25 MOU negotiations and served as the primary conduit between the FAMS and the International Air Marshal Community. He also served in Air Carrier Liaison and flew missions for six years as a FAM assigned to the Philadelphia Field Office.

Prior to joining the Federal Air Marshal Service, Mr. Johnson served for over 12 years in various international operations capacities both in the private sector and in the U.S. Army. He began his career in Germany in 1990 as an Armor Officer and went on to distinguish himself as a tank platoon leader during the First Gulf War. He served as a Battlefield Intelligence Coordinator for the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment in Amberg, Germany and then redeployed to Ft. Hood Texas, where he commanded two additional tank platoons prior to his promotion to Captain and transition to Military Intelligence. As an Intelligence Officer, he was assigned to the US Southern Command as Senior Country Analyst for the countries of Peru and Ecuador. While in this assignment, he was recognized as the Command's first analyst to coauthor an article published in the National Intelligence Digest. In March 1996, he was offered the position of Director of Operations for Kinedyne South America, a subsidiary of a U.S. multinational dedicated to the production of cargo control equipment. In May of 2001, following five years of exponential growth in Argentina, Johnson undertook the challenge of directing the U.S. operations of an international nonprofit corporation dedicated to cultural exchange.

Mr. Johnson is a Hispanic American, born in Lima, Peru. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish/Latin American Area Studies from The American University School of International Service in Washington, D.C. He is a Georgetown University ROTC Distinguished Military Graduate and has also attended graduate courses in International Studies at Boston University.

## ***Abstract***

### **Dangers of Handheld Lasers to Aircraft**

The FBI, in conjunction with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), began tracking laser strikes against aircraft within the Special Aircraft Jurisdiction of the United States in 2005. Since 2005, the deliberate targeting of aircraft by handheld lasers has increased 1,100%. In 2005, there were 311 reported incidents, followed by 420 in 2006, 643 in 2007, 955 in 2008, 1,527 in 2009, 2,836 in 2010, 3,591 in 2011, 3,482 in 2012 and 3,960 in 2013. In addition to over 17,000 laser attacks on pilots reported by the FAA since 2004, thousands more go unreported yearly; including strikes against law enforcement aircraft, media helicopters, military, medical evacuation and search and rescue aircraft as well as foreign air carriers. These incidents often result in distraction and temporary blindness, which forces pilots to divert or make emergency landings. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that laser technology has significantly improved the performance of handheld lasers. Increased internet availability of low cost handheld lasers also poses a continued problem. As a result, the FBI assesses laser strike attacks directed against aircraft pose an imminent threat to aviation safety that could result in the loss of aircraft control and possibly death. To combat this problem, FBI Criminal Investigative Division initiated a regional laser awareness campaign and reward initiative on February 11, 2014 targeting 12 field office areas of responsibility: Albuquerque, Chicago, Cleveland, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Sacramento, San Antonio, San Juan and Washington, DC. The increase in awareness has resulted in a 17% decrease in incidents in the major metropolitan areas and has led to the extension of the campaign through June 3, 2014.